

NON-SUICIDAL SELF-INJURY IN ADOLESCENTS: HOW PERSONALITY MAY COME INTO PLAY

G. Kiekens¹, R. Bruffaerts¹, M. K. Nock², M. Van de Ven³, C. Witteman³, K. Demyttenaere¹, P. Mortier¹, & L. Claes⁴

¹Research Group of Psychiatry, KU Leuven, Belgium, ²Laboratory for Clinical and Developmental Research, Harvard University, USA, ³Behavioral Science Institute, Radboud University, The Netherlands, ⁴Research Group of Clinical Psychology, KU Leuven, Belgium.

OBJECTIVES. Although research consistently showed associations between personality and Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI), it is unclear why this relation may exist. Drawing on a transactional approach, the present study examined whether perceived stress and coping are potential underlying factors between the Big Five personality traits and NSSI engagement in adolescents.

METHOD. In total, 946 Flemish (46%) and Dutch (54%) non-institutionalized adolescents (44% females; $M_{age} = 15.52$, $SD = 1.34$) were included. Measures were the NSSI subscale of the Self-Harm-Inventory, the Dutch Quick Big Five Personality questionnaire, the Perceived Stress Scale, and the Utrecht Coping List for Adolescents. Multiple parallel mediation models were examined by using a bootstrapping procedure.

RESULTS. Approximately one in four adolescents (24.31%) reported a lifetime prevalence of NSSI. Observed associations between Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and NSSI were fully explained by perceived stress and a combination of distractive, social, depressive and optimistic coping.

CONCLUSION. Our findings strongly suggest that adolescents with a specific personality constellation (high Neuroticism, low on Agreeableness and Conscientiousness) are at higher risk to engage in NSSI, because they are more prone to experience stress while having difficulty managing stress by effective coping strategies.

Corresponding author:

Glenn Kiekens

Kapucijnenvoer 33 building I, box 7001,
3000 Leuven, Belgium.

Tel: +32 016 33 25 94

E-mail: Glenn.Kiekens@kuleuven.be

Abstract poster presented on June 27 2015 at the International Society for the Study of Self-Injury Conference,
10th Edition, Heidelberg, Germany